

## Adeesha's Blog

Posted by Adeesha Hack at Monday, May 6, 2013 1:13:24 PM EDT

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### Why This Blog?

I chose to create a blog on the clothing industry. Upon hearing about the recent garment building collapse in Bangladesh and the "Canadian connection", I was both angered and ashamed. Angered because so many people died while trying to make a living, and ashamed because as a consumer, I should be more attentive about how my clothes are made. This morning (May 6), it was reported that the death toll has reached [640 people](#).

Joe Fresh @ Maple Leaf Gardens



[View Photo](#)

### The Situation

Last week, a building housing a number of garment factories collapsed. Mostly women and children worked in this building, making less than \$2 per day.

It was revealed shortly after that Joe Fresh was one of the apparel companies using this particular factory. Loblaw, the primary distributor of Joe Fresh clothing, was the target of a consumer backlash.

### Loblaw's Response

Within a week of the building collapse, Galen Weston, the CEO of Loblaw Inc., responded with a [30-minute speech](#) last week. He reported that although the company conducts regular overseas audits, building integrity is not included on the list of standards. This will now change.

One key point in Galen's speech is that Loblaw will give long-term financial support to the victims and their families.

Take a look at Loblaw's [Approach to Responsibility](#).

### Did You Know?

- 70% of garment workers in Bangladesh are women (1);
- Coughs, colds, eye pain, headaches, chest-pains and breathing problems are most common health issues in factories (1);
- Workers live in slums in "deplorable health conditions" (1);
- Women are often subjected to sexual harassment -- unwanted marriage proposals from male co-workers and supervisors are common (1):

- The garment industry accounts for 78% of Bangladesh's total exports and 13% of its GDP (2);
- 600 Bangladeshi garment workers have died in factory fires since 2006 (2).

(1) Jahan, M. (May 2012). Women workers in Bangladesh garments industry: A study of the work environment. *Journal of Social Science Today*, 1-6.

(2) International Labour Rights Forum (2012). Creating a sweat-free world, Retrieved from <http://www.laborrights.org/sweatshop-fires-in-bangladesh>.

### Questions to Think About

1. Who is ultimately responsible for this building collapse? Are we somehow all complicit in this tragedy?
2. Will this tragedy change the way corporations (especially Loblaw) conduct their business overseas?
3. As a consumer, are you more about how your clothing is made since the tragedy in Bangladesh?

### Other Resources

[Behind the Swoosh](#) - A short documentary about Nike and its shoe factory conditions in Indonesia (2009)



Watch Video

**Nike Sweatshops: Behind the Swoosh**

**Duration: (20:30)**

**User:** teamsweat - **Added:** 7/28/11

[The High Cost of Cheap Clothing](#) - CBC's *The Current* discusses the Bangladesh building tragedy (April 26, 2013)